

The Charge: CIA a Tool

By Fred Farris

Washington

Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, the lady from Maine who coined a mean metaphor, said today the Central Intelligence Agency was becoming a "missile gap" on the 1960 campaign platform of candidate Kennedy.

She was speaking, in this instance, of the "missile gap" used by Mr. Kennedy and other Democrats during the Presidential campaign to belabor the Eisenhower administration's record on defense.

Democrat critics of the Republican performance said the Soviets had many more long-range missiles than the United States, and candidate Kennedy pledged that if elected he would act to close this "gap."

One of the "missile gap" theory's leading adherents, Sen. Stuart Symington, D., Mo., suggested in an exchange with Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, during a recent hearing, that the CIA both created, and then destroyed, the "missile gap."

This was because, as Mr. McNamara had testified, intelligence evaluation was a factor in determining Soviet strength as compared with U.S. needs, and new estimates

showed in 1961 that Soviet missile power was far less than had been originally thought.

This apparently wiped out the "gap"—or as Sen. Smith caustically termed it yesterday, the "missile myth."

The Maine Republican was asked by Sen. Kenneth B. Keating, R., N. Y., in a taped TV show whether she thought it was "accurate or fair to blame our intelligence agencies" for creation of the "missile gap."

Brands It a Catch-All

The outspoken distaff member of the Senate Armed Services and Space Committees figuratively snorted her reply:

"I'm very skeptical about putting the hot potato of the missile myth on the doorstep of the CIA. The CIA is becoming a catch-all to cover up the 1960 campaign statements of candidate Kennedy which are coming back to haunt him as President."

"I do not have a very high regard for the past work of the

sode figured during the campaign and have since involved the CIA in one way or another.

Former Vice-President Nixon said in his new book, "Six Crises," that Mr. Kennedy had been briefed during the campaign by former CIA director Allen W. Dulles on U. S. secret arming of Cuban exiles for an invasion, the April, 1961 operation that ended in disaster.

Mr. Nixon charged that Mr. Kennedy nevertheless "endangered the security of the whole operation" by a campaign statement urging that the U. S. arm such Cuban exiles.

The White House has denied that Mr. Kennedy was told of this secret CIA operation, and was supported in this by Mr. Dulles.

Summit Flop Recalled

During the 1960 primary campaign, the CIA's aerial reconnaissance operations burst on the world scene with Soviet

criticized for this reported view.

Last month, the plane pilot, Francis Gary Powers, returned to the U. S. after being freed by the Russians and was given a clean bill of health by the CIA. He carried out his mission to the best of his ability, the CIA report said, implying that he was not to blame for the summit-smashing repercussions of his capture.

A Flap Develops

But the "missile gap," which many politicians now consider discreetly interred, showed a surprising degree of political life, even after the 1960 campaign was over and Mr. Kennedy was in the White House.

On Feb. 6, 1961, Defense Secretary McNamara had an informal private meeting with a few reporters. He had been understood to feel that preliminary studies he had made suggested that no "missile gap" existed, despite the campaign

noted sarcastically that the much-mentioned "missile gap" became very hard to locate when Mr. Kennedy entered the White House.

Democrats shot back. Sen. Symington said that if the Eisenhower administration had not adopted a "calculated" policy of preventing candidate Kennedy "from obtaining adequate information," he would have been "in a better position to tell the American people the facts."

Sen. Richard B. Russell, D., Ga., chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said flatly "a missile gap does exist," a view echoed by other Democrats.

Then, toward the end of last year, intelligence estimates which revised downward the U. S. assessment of Soviet missile power began to be leaked to the press. These held that the "missile gap" period—during 1958, 1959 and 1960—reflected intelligence guesses of unprotected Soviet capabilities into actual intended production. But now, it was said, it was learned the Russians did not go into all-out production.